

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-18 have been amended and claims 19 and 20 are newly added. Reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority, and receipt of all of the certified copies of the priority documents. Applicants also thank the Examiner for considering all of the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on February 17, 2004.

In the Office Action of June 28, 2005, the Examiner objected to the title, asserting that it was not descriptive. Applicants have replaced the title with --- Color Image Forming Apparatus with a Removable and Inclined Intermediate Transfer Body Unit ---. Applicants respectfully submit that the title as amended is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this ground of objection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings, asserting that Figure 8 should be labeled with a label such as "Prior Art." Applicants have amended Figure 8 to include the label "Conventional Art", and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection and indicate that the drawings are acceptable.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the disclosure, asserting that the reference numerals referred to pages 9-10 of the specification do not correspond to the figures. Applicants have amended the specification to correspond to the figures, and

respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

The Examiner also asserted that the phrase “assembled developing unit” (appearing on pages 16-20 of the specification) is unclear, and recommended changing this phrase to “assembled photoreceptor unit”. Applicants have followed the Examiner’s recommendation by amending the appropriate paragraphs on pages 16-20, as well as on pages 5 and 24, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Tokutake et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,003). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

The present invention is directed towards a color image forming apparatus. According to one aspect of the invention, the color image forming apparatus includes, inter alia, a plurality of developing units for containing different color toners to form a color image, an intermediate transfer body unit, a developing unit cartridge that integrally holds the developing units, and an intermediate transfer body unit cartridge that integrally holds the intermediate transfer body unit. The intermediate transfer body unit cartridge is obliquely inclined with respect to the developing unit cartridge when the intermediate transfer body unit cartridge and the developing unit cartridge are installed in the color image forming apparatus.

According to another aspect of the invention, the color image forming apparatus includes a plurality of photo-receptor units which are configured to attach to the intermediate transfer body unit via at least one groove formed in a side of the intermediate transfer body unit, and be removed from the color image forming

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apparatus with removal of the intermediate transfer body unit from the color image forming apparatus.

Tokutake is directed towards a color image forming apparatus. The color image forming apparatus includes a plurality of image forming sections 10Y, 10M, 10C and 10K, and an intermediate transfer unit 7. See Figure 1 and col. 6, lines 17-21. The image forming sections 10Y, 10M, 10C and 10K are provided with developing units 4Y, 4M, 4C and 4K, respectively. See Figure 1 and col. 6, lines 25-42. The intermediate transfer unit 7 comprises an intermediate transfer object 70. See Figure 3 and col. 6, lines 44-46.

Tokutake discloses, in col. 7, line 40-42 and lines 62-67, that the intermediate transfer object 70 is of a longitudinal type. Tokutake also discloses, in col. 9, lines 45-47, that the intermediate transfer unit 7 is extended in the vertical direction. See also Figures 1, 3 and 5.

Applicants respectfully submit that Tokutake fails to disclose or suggest a color image forming apparatus which includes an intermediate transfer body unit cartridge obliquely inclined with respect to a developing unit cartridge when the intermediate transfer body unit cartridge and the developing unit cartridge are installed in the color image forming apparatus, as recited in independent claim 1. In fact, in the analysis of claim 13 in the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Tokutake's intermediate transfer unit is not obliquely positioned. Thus, Applicants submit that Tokutake does not anticipate Applicants' claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner

withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) of independent claim 1.

In the analysis of claim 13 in the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Iwamura et al. (Japanese Patent No. 2002-182539) discloses an image forming apparatus having an obliquely positioned intermediate transfer belt, and further asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to position the imaging components as done in Iwamura because Iwamura teaches that the device can be made small sized and easier to maintain. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As noted above, Tokutake teaches that advantages of arranging the intermediate transfer object 70/ intermediate transfer unit 7 in a vertical direction include reduction of floor space, down-sizing of the apparatus, and ease of removal of the intermediate transfer object 70/ intermediate transfer unit 7 from the color image forming apparatus. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Tokutake teaches away from arranging the intermediate transfer object 70/ intermediate transfer unit 7 in a position obliquely inclined with respect to image forming sections 10Y, 10M, 10C and 10K.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Tokutake and Iwamura fails to disclose or suggest a color image forming apparatus which includes an intermediate transfer body unit cartridge obliquely inclined with respect to a developing unit cartridge when the intermediate transfer body unit cartridge and the developing unit cartridge are installed in the color image forming apparatus, as recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim

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1 is in condition for allowance, and respectfully request the Examiner to indicate allowance of the claim.

Dependent claims 2-12 are also submitted to be in condition for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tokutake et al. in view of Iwamura et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As submitted above, the combination of Tokutake and Iwamura fails to disclose or suggest a color image forming apparatus which includes an intermediate transfer body unit cartridge obliquely inclined with respect to a developing unit cartridge when the intermediate transfer body unit cartridge and the developing unit cartridge are installed in the color image forming apparatus, as recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that dependent claims 13-18 are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 19 and 20 have been added by the present Response. Applicants respectfully submit that Tokutake and Iwamura, individually or in combination, also fail to disclose or suggest a color image forming apparatus that includes photo-receptor units which are configured to attach to an intermediate transfer body unit via at least one groove formed in a side of the intermediate transfer body unit, and be removed from the color image forming apparatus with removal of the intermediate transfer body unit from the color image forming apparatus, as recited in newly added claims 19 and 20. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 19 and 20 are

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allowable, and respectfully request an indication of such by the Examiner.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

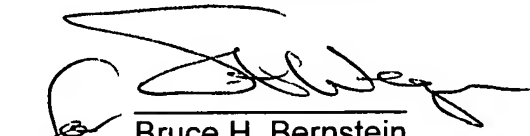
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate. Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 8. This sheet replaces the original sheet including Figure 8. In Figure 8, the label --- Conventional Art --- has been added.